

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ABIDJA 05262 031436Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----069806 031436Z /53

O 031400Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8995

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LOME IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUBUMBASHI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAKAR IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T ABIDJAN 5262

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MOPS, EFIN, EAID, CG, FR, BE, MO

SUBJ: SHABA AFRICAN FORCE

REFS: A) ABIDJAN 5258 (NOTAL), STATE 139907

1. AMBASSADOR THIS MORNING WENT TO SEE SECRETARY
GENERAL OF IVORIAN GOVERNMENT ALAIN BELKIRI WHO IS
RANKING MEMBER OF HOUPHOUET'S STAFF IN ABIDJAN,
AND ASKED HIM WHETHER HE COULD CONFIRM INFORMATION
CONTAINED IN DEPARTMENT'S REFTEL. BELKIRI SAID
THAT HE HAD RECEIVED WORD BY TELEPHONE THIS MORNING
FROM PRESIDENT'S PARTY IN PARIS THAT IVORIAN
GOVERNMENT HAS REPEAT HS AGREED TO CONTRIBUTE TROOPS
TO INTER-AFRICAN FORCE IN ZAIRE. BELKIRI ALSO SAID

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THAT HE COULD CONFIRM THAT IVORIANS WOULD NEED TO
RELY ON U.S. ASSISTANCE TO TRANSPORT THEIR TROOPS
TO ZAIRE. HE DID NOT REPEAT NOT KNOW HOWEVER HOW
MANY IVORIAN TROOPS WOULD BE INVOLVED OR WHEN
THEY WOULD BE READY FOR EMBARKATION. BELKIRI
THOUGHT THAT THESE DECISIONS HAD NOT REPEAT NOT
YET BEEN MADE. IVOIAN MINISTERS WOULD BE RETURNING

TO ABIDJAN EARLY SUNDAY MORNING AND BELKIRI ASSUMED THAT DECISIONS ON NUMBER OF TROOPS AND TIMING OF EMBARKATION WOULD BE MADE AFTER THEIR RETURN. BELKIRI SAID THAT HE WOULD TELEPHONE WITH THIS INFORMATION AS SOON AS HE RECEIVED IT SUNDAY. IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR'S QUESTION, BELKIRI SAID THAT HE DID NOT REPEAT NOT KNOW WHETHER HOUPHOUET HIMSELF WOULD BE RETURNING TO ABIDJAN ON SUNDAY. HE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT QUOTE ALL UNQUOTE MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE, WOULD RETURN BUT WAS NOT REPEAT NOT SURE WHETHER THIS INCLUDED HOUPHOUET.

2. DEFENSE ATTACHE HAS MEANWHILE BEEN IN TOUCH AGAIN THIS MORNING WITH CHIEF OF STAFF OF IVORIAN ARMED FORCES L.T.G. COULIBALY WHO HAD NO REPEAT NO FURTHER INFORMATION TO PROVIDE. COULIBALY SAID THAT HE EXPECTED TO BE SEEING DEFENSE MINISTER SUNDAY MORNING AND WOULD CONTACT DEFENSE ATTACHE AFTER DOING SO.

3. COMMENT: THIS IS THE BEST INFORMATION ON IVORIANS INTENTIONS THAT WE CAN PROVIDE AT PRESENT TIME. WE ASSUME THAT IVORIAN CONTRIBUTION TO INTER-AFRICAN FORCE WILL BE IN FORM OF ONE
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INFANTRY COMPANY (APPROXIMATELY 100-150 MEN) AND THAT THEY WILL NOT REPEAT NOT BE READY FOR PICK-UP BEFORE MONDAY JUNE 5.
STEARNS

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NNN

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